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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP
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Personality Information

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note: There has been considerable doubt expressed in press releases as to whether HO Chi Minh is actually still the most powerful man in Viet Nam or whether he is in the power of other persons behind the scenes. [REDACTED] these doubts are not based on fact and that HO Chi Minh remains definitely the most powerful figure in Viet Nam and that the second most powerful is VO Nguyen Giap, the only leader in addition to HO who is really well known to the population. Detailed personality information on these two men is well known and is not included in this report.)

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HO Chi Minh -- VO Nguyen Giap

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The Communist Party in French Indo China does not like its leaders to be too intellectual and loyalty is definitely preferred to intellectualism. The latter tends too much toward doubt regarding orthodox doctrine. [REDACTED] note: [REDACTED] confirms this, with the exception of the very top leaders. [REDACTED] states that PHAN Boi (Washington note: HOANG Hum Nam), Vice Minister of the Interior before his death, was 'suppressed' by the Viet Minh for this very fault. Source A reports as a certainty that Boi was drowned by accident while swimming.) HO Chi Minh always wanted to avoid war with the French because he felt that he needed more time to strengthen the Communist Party in French Indo China. He was further encouraged to sign the 6 March 1946 Agreement and subsequent French accords because of the apparent ascendancy of the Communist Party in France at that time. On the other hand, the four leading members of the Directing Committee of the Viet Minh--VO Nguyen Giap, HA Ba Cang, DANG Xuan Khu and NGUYEN Luong Bang--were opposed to that truce. In the deliberations of the Directing Committee, HO was eventually forced to bow to the will of the majority; hence the outbreak of hostilities in December 1946. VO Nguyen Giap was the spearhead of this policy in opposition to that of HO. Giap, with his brilliant, active and independent mind, is an illustration of the reason that the Communist Party does not want its members to be too intellectual. Giap is entirely too independent; he is less submissive to Party discipline than most and is

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and is personally ambitious. If the French fail to suppress Giap, he will certainly sooner or later be suppressed by his own Party. If and when a break takes place between HO and Giap, the other three—Cang, Khu and Bang, will probably follow HO. HO Chi Minh at present signs no decrees. He has Giap sign all governmental decrees so that at a later time, if it seems desirable to reach an agreement with the French, he will be able to blame Giap for extremist activities. [redacted] note: There are other evidences that HO has always been unwilling to close the door on an accord with the French. [redacted] Viet Minh propaganda draws a sharp distinction between the "good" French and the French "imperialists". [redacted] this propaganda permits HO to incite the people to greater resistance efforts and simultaneously to lay the foundation for a future accord with the French, and that the French also wish to leave this door open as evidenced by some French propaganda to the effect that HO is in the hands of extremists. This may be intended to permit a later rapprochement with HO and a repression of the extremists, of which Giap is certainly Number One.)

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[redacted] note: The Viet Nam News Service reported on 28 July 1947 that VO has been replaced as Minister of National Defense by TA Quang Bau. However, he is still Commander in Chief of the Viet Namese army, military and self defense organizations.)

25X1A PHAM van Dong

Partially behind the scenes of the Vietnam Government great power is wielded by PHAM van Dong. His power is at least equal to that of VO Nguyen Giap but it is generally exercised in a different field. Giap is at present confining his attention principally to military matters; Dong is interested in all phases of Government and Vietminh party politics. Dong was born about 1907 in Tonkin; he received his education in Indochina. He has not been in the USSR, but may have been in the Chinese Communist Capital of Yenan. Under the French regime he had a position in the Finance Service. During the Coalition Government he contributed a number of well-written articles to the newspaper La Republique and later to La Peuple, organ of the Cultural Association for National Welfare. These articles were usually signed with a pseudonym. He is very strong on Marxist theory. Although he has never openly acknowledged his Communism,

[redacted] Dong is a Communist. He is one of the three chiefs of the Can-Po, the other two are HO Chi Minh and VO Nguyen Giap. Dong is an important member of the all-powerful Tong Po, Directing Committee or Politburo of the Vietminh Party. He is capable, indefatigable and broad in his interests. It is typical of the manner in which he prefers to operate that his only public position is the comparatively inconspicuous one of Vice Minister of Economic Affairs. His real power behind the scenes is exercised through the Can Po with its control over propaganda, political indoctrination and secret police; through the Tong Po with its control over the Vietminh Party; and above all through the application of his extraordinary personality. He not only runs the Minister of Economic Affairs but also wields great influence in all the other Ministries, notably Finance, Education and Labor as well as the Information Department of the Ministry of Interior.

(Shanghai Note: PHAM van Dong was previously reported as the Minister of Economic Affairs; he is the Vice Minister and the one who wields the real power in the ministry. Sources A and B from the official Government list report that the Minister of Economic Affairs is PHAM Anh.)

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[redacted] note: Other reports from reliable sources state that PHAM Van Dong was born in Annam, studied in Hue and Hanoi, went to the Ecole Staline in Moscow for three years, is an avowed Communist and fanatically devoted to HO Chi Minh.)

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PHAN Anh

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3. PHAN Anh comes from a family of outstanding scholars. His father, a scholar of considerable imagination and known for his eccentricities, died in 1944; he was at one time a brilliant professor in the private school at Thanh-Long in Hanoi, the same school at which VO nguyen Giap and HOANG minh Giap also taught. PHAN Anh was born in Northern Annam about 1910. In 1938 he received his "licence-en-droit" from the University of Hanoi; he then went to France where he received his "doctorat-en-droit". In 1940 he returned to Indochina and became a lawyer in the Hanoi law courts. This was comparatively rare for an Annamite as the French generally attempted to hold a monopoly on this profession for themselves. Practically speaking, the Annamese graduates of the Hanoi Law School, unless they could afford to continue their studies in France, could look forward to no legal career more brilliant than that of "commis-greffier" in the law courts, i.e. a Government functionary. Anh established a reputation for brilliance and eloquence and became popular with the masses. In the Japanese-sponsored puppet government of TRAN trong Kim, Anh was Minister of Youth because he wished to be helpful to Vietnamese Youth. In the early period of the Vietminh he held no important post. He became chief of the Tu Ve for the street on which he lived in Hanoi. In February 1946 he was accorded an important post, though not ministerial, in National Defense in HO chi Minh's Government. In his present position of Minister of Economic Affairs, despite his considerable qualifications, he is overshadowed by the strong and active HUAM van Tong. Anh is a non-partisan; his attitude toward the French is a moderate and reasonable one.

TRAN van Giau

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Another figure who exercises great power with comparatively little publicity is TRAN van Giau. He has never occupied an official position in the Vietnam Cabinet. It is well known that he is a Corruptist. He was born in 19...; no details of his education are available except that he graduated from the SUN Yat-Sen School (Chung Shan University) in Moscow, where he attained the highest degree ("Agrège Rouge") accorded by that school. Few Vietnamese have attained this high degree in Moscow; one other who did was TRAN dinh Long, who afterwards became an important member of the Vietminh, but was assassinated by gangsters in the employ of the Tong Minh Hoi; this incident was a curious one; the DMH had made no particular plans to assassinate Long--the gangsters merely happened to get him without realizing his importance; this was a startling blow to the Vietminh. Outwardly TRAN van Giau has had many different professions--journalist, professor in private schools, tutor; but during the Japanese occupation and ever since his return from the USSR, he has been in the secret employ of the Soviets. Giau was chiefly responsible for the Vietminh uprising in Cochinchina after the Japanese surrender. From November 1945 to January 1946 his principal role was acting as liaison between the clandestine Vietminh in Cochinchina and the Vietminh Government in Tonkin. He is at present the delegate of the Vietnam Government to Bangkok, and was also one of the Vietnam Delegates at the recent Pan-Asiatic Conference in Delhi. He is proud but charming, an excellent orator and can sway at will the emotions of his listeners.

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TRAN Van Giau, alias Dr. Hoang, alias NGUYEN Duc Quon, is a Cochinchinese who has been reported to be one of the Viet Minh chiefs who studied in France and Moscow and was imprisoned by the French for a number of years. He is a well-known writer and presently the leader of the Free Annamites in Bangkok.)

PHAN ngoc Thach

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One of the Vietnamese delegates to the Pan-Asiatic Conference was Dr. PHAM ngoc Thach. He was born about 1907. He received his early education in Indochina, but went to France for his advanced studies. He is a doctor of medicine. He is a Nationalist rather than a Communist--i.e. very anti-French and has aligned himself tentatively with the Vietminh, but is deeply suspicious of Communism. After the Japanese defeat, he acted as liaison between the Nationalist elements of Cochinchina and the Vietnam Government in Tonkin, fulfilling the equivalent role that Giau filled for the Communists. Thach was arrested by the French but returned in exchange for a Frenchman held prisoner by the Annamese. He was the Minister of the Interior in the Vietminh Provisional Government, just prior to the Coalition Government. He was also one of the delegates at the Talat Conference.

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[redacted] note: Pham ngoc Thach used the name TRAN van Luan when he went to the Pan-Asiatic Conference. He has been reported to be an Undersecretary of State in the Viet Nam Government and is presently in Bangkok, serving as HO chi Minh's deputy. [redacted] his statement that he had given the order to execute DUONG van Giau, liberal statesman and friend of Nai Pridi, because Duong intended to stay on in Saigon and form a provisional government agreeable to the French.)

25X1A TON Duc Thang

[redacted] The death of both the Minister of the Interior (HUYNH thuc Khanh) and Vice Minister of Interior (HOANG huu Nam, alias PHAN Boi) have been previously reported. See paragraph 1).

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6. The new Minister of Interior is TON Duc Thang. Source does not know if he is a Communist. Thang was imprisoned for some years at Poulo Condor, but was liberated in 1945 when the Japanese released nearly all the Annamese who had been imprisoned by the French in Indochina. He was not well known until January 1946 when he became President of the National Assembly. He is 62 years of age. Despite his considerable qualifications he tends to be dominated by the Vice Minister who runs the Ministry.

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[redacted] note: On 28 July 1947 the Viet Nam News Service reported that TON Duc Thang has been replaced as Minister of Interior and has become Inspector General for the whole nation.)

TRAN duy Hung

7. The new Vice Minister of Interior is TRAN duy Hung. He is a physician slightly over 30 years old. He is technically a non-partisan, but is really very pro-Vietminh. In the period before the Vietminh coup d'etat he was very popular among the Youth and the general public at Hanoi. He was a member of the People's Committee for Hanoi and became President of the Executive Committee of the People's Committee of Hanoi in December 1945. He is a rich man and might be a potential leader of the Conservative Group within the Vietminh if the present Vietminh disintegrates. However, his continuing sentiment in hatred of the French, and if it should become necessary for him to become a Communist in order to continue the struggle against the French, it is possible that he would do so. He wields more influence than his superior, the Minister of Interior.

TRAN van Binh

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He speaks English well. He was pleasant and alert and appeared far from the "revolutionary" type. He was a very wealthy Hanoi merchant. He stated that he belonged to no political party.

Note: Binh has been previously reported as one of the Conservative Group in the Vietnam Government; a number of conservative or moderate persons have heretofore played some part in the Vietnamese Government, in which most of them occupy technical rather than political positions. [redacted] states that it is from this group that the new leadership may be expected to arise if the Vietnam is on the point of disintegration into two principal groups--one moderate, the other extremist. Binh is about 50 years old, with a manner more European than Vietnamese and appeared to be quite at ease with a foreigner. Binh admitted to source that the present Government contains representatives of many political parties as well as non-partisans, but it is all Vietnamese controlled. Note: This "open secret" has been previously reported; however, the open admission of this fact to an official of the Vietnam Government is significant--it may foreshadow the growing importance of the Conservatives.)

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